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# "Ag Notes"

A SUMMARY OF NEWS, EVENTS AND FACTS FROM USDA



Secretary Ann M. Veneman announcing emergency drought relief with Congressman John Thune of South Dakota, Congressman Tom Osborne of Nebraska, Senator Craig Thomas of Wyoming and Congressman Jerry Moran of Kansas.

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President Bush—

"During National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, we renew our dedication to these institutions and strengthen our commitment to securing educational freedom, opportunity, and access for every American." 9/15-21

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"American farm and ranch families embody our Nation's values of hard work, love of the land, and love of country. Farming not only feeds our country but also increasingly provides more of our Nation's energy needs. The success of America's farmers and ranchers is essential to our economy, and helping to ensure their safety is an important goal..." *National Farm Safety Week 9/15/21*

## VENEMAN JOINS THUNE IN ANNOUNCING \$752 MILLION IN AID TO LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

Secretary Veneman joined Representative John Thune (SD) and other Congressional leaders this week in announcing a \$752 million Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) that will provide immediate relief to cattle, sheep and buffalo producers in declared agricultural disaster areas in 37 states.

"Livestock producers have very few risk management tools available during these difficult times," Veneman said. "This decision will provide livestock producers, who are the most in need of assistance, with immediate relief."

The new program was suggested by Congressman Thune and "is another example of how "the Bush Administration continues to utilize every available resource to assist during the drought," Veneman said. Using Section 32 funds—a portion of U.S. customs receipts designated for use by USDA—sign up will begin October 1 with payments to be sent soon thereafter.

Rep. John Thune R-S.D suggested using this method to provide aid in a Sept. 12 letter to the Secretary. The Congressman thanked the Administration for their leadership and said, "this is an enormous announcement for livestock producers...that gets cash, money, payments directly to our producers in a very, very quick and expedition way."

The LCP is available to producers in counties that were designated as primary disaster areas due to drought in 2001 and/or 2002. The LCP is in addition to other programs that have been provided to date by USDA, which total \$1.3 billion, to provide relief to producers. This has included a \$150 million feed assistance program, extended haying and grazing for on Conservation Reserve Program acres nationally, providing \$54 million for the Emergency Conservation Program to help producers rehabilitate damaged farmland. In addition, the Federal Crop Insurance program has been providing indemnities for production and revenue losses and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program is expected to provide \$250 million. As well, the Department has expedited emergency declarations making producers eligible for low-interest loans. For additional details click on the Drought icon on USDA's home page [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

## Farm Bill Implementation on Schedule

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman told the Senate Agriculture Committee this week that USDA is on schedule implementing the 2002 farm bill and that farmers will receive direct and counter-cyclical payments on time.

"We have made great progress in implementing the farm bill within a short period of time," Veneman said. In a wide-ranging review of the massive bill and it's many programs, the Secretary said, "The new law contains many complex issues and new programs that require a great deal of work to implement, but even so, the team at USDA has been working hard to get the job done in an expeditious and efficient manner." (CONTINUED, page 2)

## Quotables...

"Seven Hundred and fifty million dollars is a lot of dough. It offsets the costs that have been calculated for livestock losses. I think it is important in this program to be able to have it immediately begin. You sign up Oct. 1, and [then receive] direct payments so the producers can use the relief for whatever they need to. So this is excellent."

Congressman Tom Osborne, Nebraska, 9/19/02



Deputy Secretary James Moseley watches during the USDA observance of Patriot Day as the flag is unfurled on Jamie L. Whitten Building, at the same time a flag was unfurled by the President at the rebuilt Pentagon. 9/11

"What we experienced just a year ago today will never be forgotten. But since these tragic events, we have seen a spirit of renewal here in America. We have seen a nation heal by joining together through selfless acts of kindness and compassion. The terrorists thought they would weaken our nation, but we proved them wrong." Sec. Veneman 9/11/02.

## Key farm bill accomplishments -- Continued --

During her testimony, the Secretary outlined key farm bill accomplishments in implementing the now four-month old law:

- ❑ Created an internal structure to coordinate program implementation department-wide and government wide, including the development of a detailed tracking system for all farm bill actions.
- ❑ Established a 2002 Farm Bill website with program details and answers to questions for producers needing information about the new law.
- ❑ Announced signup for direct/counter-cyclical payments will begin Oct. 1.
- ❑ Signup for the Milk Income Loss Contract, which provides counter-cyclical payments to dairy producers began on Aug. 13 -- payments begin in Oct.
- ❑ Implemented an historic overhaul of the peanut program replacing the market quota system with the direct and counter-cyclical payment program. Signup began Sept. 3 and runs through Nov. 22.
- ❑ Published a final rule on program details for the sugar program and announced the 2002 crop marketing allotments for beet and cane sugar.
- ❑ Released \$750 million for 2002 Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Wetlands Reserve Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program and the Farmland Protection Program.
- ❑ Awarded grants to states through the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.
- ❑ Awarded more than \$700 million in grants for 377 projects in 47 states and Puerto Rico for water and waste projects. In addition, \$33 million in value-added grants will be awarded soon.
- ❑ Voluntary guidelines for country-of-origin labeling are under development.
- ❑ Created an internal taskforce to help form the office for the new Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights.

## VENEMAN RESPONDS TO NAS REPORT—

In response to a National Academy of Sciences report about agriculture and bioterrorism, Secretary Veneman issued a statement that in part said:

"Protecting the American food and agriculture system against intentional threats continues to be a top priority for the Bush Administration. In a very short period of time, the President has bolstered food safety, pest and disease protection systems and research programs, thus strengthening an already strong infrastructure.

"The NAS report recognizes the nation has a strong infrastructure in place and, as we have acknowledged for some time, our nation must remain vigilant and be prepared to face bioterrorism and other potential threats. Particularly since September 11<sup>th</sup> of last year, USDA has worked aggressively with the Office of Homeland Security and other federal, state and local agencies to strengthen our infrastructure, better prepare in the event of an emergency, and improve coordination and response mechanisms.

"The Administration hasn't just talked about improving these important programs, we have dedicated significant resources to this cause."

For a complete copy of Veneman's statement go to [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).